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ABSTRACT

This state handbook details guidelines and regulations for teachers of foreign language in the elementary schools. Principal factors to be considered in the establishment of a FLES program are examined; they include: (1) community and professional support, (2) choice of a foreign language, (3) teachers, (4) students, (5) programs, (6) syllabuses and teaching program, (7) supervision and evaluation, (8) possible reasons for program failure, and (9) elementary schools and Title 3. An introduction to the nature of FLES programs and a bibliography are included. (RL)

ED041515

Guidelines and Regulations

FOREIGN LANGUAGES
in the
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Carson City, Nevada
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FOREWORD

The added attention and importance currently being given to the desirability of the development of proficiency in at least one language other than English has caused Nevada public schools to review the curriculum at all levels.

The field of foreign language study which heretofore has been left to the secondary school level is now being evaluated with the thought in mind of introducing it into the course of study of the elementary school. There are positive indications that this approach to foreign language study will continue and schools, administrators, and teachers will need some guide if there is to be a continuity in the program leading to a more completely adequate sequential study pattern.

Therefore, this handbook has been developed in an attempt to meet the need for a coordinating factor. It has been designed to assist school administrators in planning a sound foreign language program for the elementary schools and to provide an understanding of some of the problems characteristic in arranging such a plan so it will be of the greatest value to the pupil's growing need for a knowledge of foreign languages.

It is the hope of the State Department of Education that this booklet will prove helpful. Appreciation is expressed to all who had any part in its preparation.

Byron F. Stetler
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR

FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

During the past few years there has been a large increase in the introduction of foreign language instruction in the elementary school. The attendant publicity and controversy which this change has created has been widespread. Since teachers and administrators at various schools and in different community groups in Nevada have expressed interest in this area of learning, a clear yet concise statement of guidelines for Foreign Language instruction in the Elementary School (which has been abbreviated to FLES) seems appropriate.

Instruction in Foreign Languages at the elementary school level is not new. Indeed such teaching was done in ancient civilizations and in the schools of America from the 1630's and on. Teaching foreign languages in the elementary schools was relatively widespread in many areas of the United States until World War 1. However, the purposes of this instruction during those years were to aid in assimilating ethnic immigrant groups into the American way of life. The program, in itself, was self-defeating as these children became Americanized and the second generation emerged.

Realizing that the essence of language is the ability to communicate and that the acquisition of a second language takes a long time, a few pioneering public and private schools inaugurated instruction in foreign languages in the elementary grades, during the 1920's and 1930's, with the ultimate objective being the mastery of the second language.

Various larger school districts entered into this type of program in the early 1940's and the 1950's saw the program expand more rapidly with the awakening of national interest in FLES. With the realization in the late 1950's that proficiency in foreign languages is tied inexorably to our nation's survival, elementary school foreign language programs have become a factor in the curriculum planning of a large percentage of our nation's schools.

Recent statistics on the teaching of foreign language in the elementary schools reveal that during the 1959-60 school year there were 1,030,097 students studying some foreign language in the public

elementary schools of the United States. Private and laboratory school enrollments swelled this number to a total of 1,227,006 students studying thirteen foreign languages.*

1. Spanish
2. French
3. German
4. Russian
5. Italian
6. Japanese
7. Hawaiian
8. Chinese
9. Norwegian
10. Latin
11. Greek
12. Swedish
13. Serbian

"Very young children are language conscious and language curious by nature; later in life, language learning has to be motivated . . ."

William R. Parker

* Marjorie Breunig. Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools of the United States, 1959–60. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1969.)

PURPOSES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The principal objectives of foreign language study today are different from those of just a few year ago; emphasis now is on learning an additional language as an oral communication skill, rather than solely on the ability to write a language. This shift in emphasis encourages elementary foreign language programs since children at this level are able to grasp more quickly oral skills than wirtten ones. The following statements of the philosophy and objectives underlying modern foreign language instruction were developed by the Nevada Foreign Language Course of Study Committee in April of 1961.

I. PHILOSOPHY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Inasmuch as we are living in a world in which all nations and peoples aredaily being brought closer together, it becomes necessary for our public schools to promote better universal understanding by offering to all students the opportunity to study foreign languages.

Today foreign language study is, therefore, assuming not only an imperative, but a crucially important role.

All students shall be given the opportunity and should be encouraged to participate in the foreign language program. This participation should bring about the better appreciation, and knowledge of, and respect for, the life and cultures of the peoples throughout the world.

II. MAIN LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVES

Since the ability to communicate is the heart of modern foreign language study, initial emphasis should be on learning to communicate orally.

Learning a language is a four-fold process: hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are closely related and largely interdependent. Speech cannot come without hearing, while reading and writing are linked by the common system of representing the language itself.

1. Hearing: The student should understand the foreign languag as it is spoken by native speakers in situations similar to his own experience.

2. Speaking: The student should, within his experience, develop fluency and efficiency in speaking the foreign language correctly.

3. Reading: The student should develop the ability to read, without conscious translation, anything within the range of what the student has learned to understand and to say.

4. Writing: The student should be able to communicate in writing his thoughts within the range of his vocabulary.

There are, in addition to these processes, some more specific goals for the teaching of foreign language at the elementary school level. These include:

1. Providing positive experiences in order that children will develop confidence in their ability to learn other languages, because research seems to indicate that once the "language barrier" imposed by the mother tongue is broken, the acquisition of one or more foreign languages becomes much easier. Students beginning the study of a second language in early life are often able to undertake a third language a few years later.

2. Identifying linguistic talent at an early age and providing these students with a program designed to develop their talent to a maximum degree. Through such a recognition and a more planned program exceptionally talented students may hope to acquire competency in as many as three foreign languages by the completion of grade twelve.

3. Providing an extended, uninterrupted sequence of foreign language study in order that a student may attain a high level of proficiency at the time he completes his formal education. By beginning this sequence in the lower elementary grades, when the imitative powers in children are at their maximum, students can acquire a relatively accent-free pronunciation of another language. Since the acquisition of a foreign language requires years of practice, adequate time must be provided if competency in language skills are to be secured.

III. ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Foreign language in the elementary schools should never be envisioned as a program in itself. It is merely the elementary school portion of a foreign language learning program that extends, unbroken, through grade twelve. It can no more be isolated than addition or reading can be abstracted from the whole mathematics and English programs. The day when the elementary and high schools were regarded as separate entities is past and education must now be aimed at Kindergarten through grade twelve or Kindergarten through competency. In some states the program now includes the Junior or Community College. The day may well come when Kindergarten through the Master's degree will be the basis of our educational planning.

Learning a language to the point of real proficiency withing the limitations imposed by our educational system requires an extended sequence of from six to ten years. Unless a school is prepared to enter a foreign language program completely in an extended sequence of this length, it is highly recommended that the district place first priority on establishing a six-year program (7-12) in the secondary schools. A vast amount of teaching materials is already available for this program.

INSTITUTING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

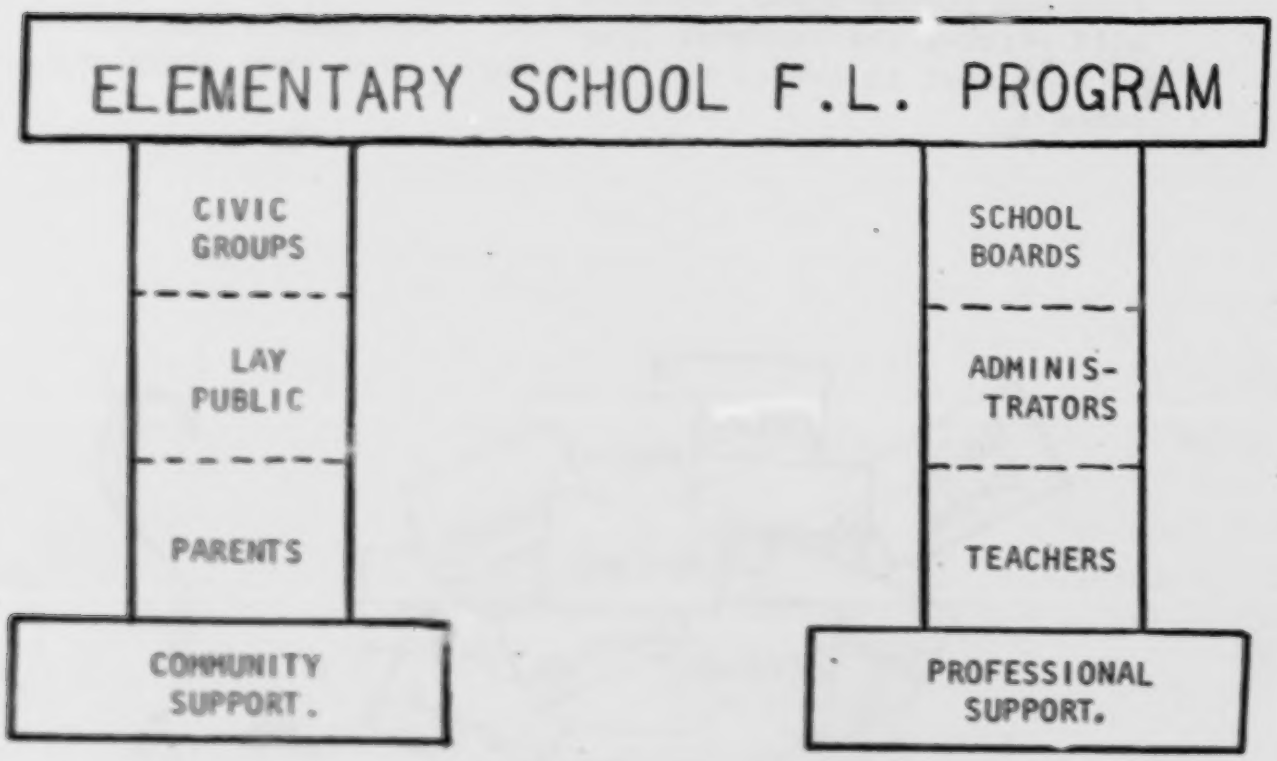
School districts contemplating the teaching of a foreign language in the elementary school program should plan thoroughly and well in advance. Far too many of these programs have failed because of inadequate preparation. It is better, by far, to delay while preparations are made than to cause the program to fail, for failure may result in years of unwillingness on the part of communities and schools to try again.

Communities undertaking such a program should utilize the following guides in their planning.

I. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Teaching a second language in the elementary school requires the endorsement and whole-hearted support of a majority of the people in the community, especially the parents of the elementary school children. School administrators and teachers should plan thoroughly and publicize the program well in advance of the time it is to be offered. Civic and parental leaders should be enlisted to aid in establishing the program.

Professional educators must remember that the curriculum of the public schools is determined by the community. Education is a public function in a democracy and while school administrators need not be swayed by every public whim or vocal group, they must, in the end, shape the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the children in the area. These needs are established and determined by society, not by curriculum planners. The role of an educator is to recognize these needs and develop a program to meet them.



Each is important to succeed.

II. PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Local educators - teachers, supervisors, and administrators - should be informed of the program throughout all stages of its planning. Their assistance should also be utilized in planning the program, gathering of materials, and correlation of it with the other disciplines. A successful program in education must be a "team" effort and a team cannot hope to succeed unless each member knows what each other is trying to accomplish and is willing to cooperate to attain the common goals of education.

Especially important is the support of the supervisors and administrators who will directly oversee the foreign language instruction and be concerned with both its educational and mechanical implementation.

Equally important is the support and aid of the secondary foreign language teachers who, as a part of the entire articulated program, will receive the students later on. They have a reasonable right to know what to expect of the students when they reach the secondary schools.

III. CHOICE OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Most of the cultural, social, and linguistic values of FLES study can be achieved regardless of the specific language taught. Once the "language barrier" has been broken, the task of learning additional languages which may become important to the child is much easier.

The following criteria should aid in the selection of the language or languages to be offered.

A. Community interest and needs. The wishes of parents and community leaders in regard to teaching certain languages should be determined and observed.

B. Local resources providing opportunities to use the language.

C. Teacher availability. This is probably the most important criteria since, in he audio-lingual situation in the elementary classroom, the teacher is the cornerstone of foreign language instruction.

D. Continuity and articulation of the program from the beginning through grade twelve.

E. National needs and interests: The United States needs persons trained in twenty-four "critical" languages. A trend has already begun to inaugurate the teaching of some of these languages in the public schools and should be encouraged wherever possible. Languages like Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Japanese are already being placed in elementary schools.

IV. TEACHERS

The teacher is the keystone of any instruction. It is preferable that the teacher be a well trained elementary teacher who has a good command of the foreign language. The speech of the teacher need not be of native quality provided that the students are exposed to other models by means of television, radio, tapes, and records. Language teachers using television have had good success in FLES teaching in a number of experimental programs. This requires "follow-up" by the teacher in the self-contained classroom.

The ability to teach is the first criteria, and a accent-free pronunciation is the second, which means that a native speaker of the language may not necessarily be the best teacher. It is suggested that a foreign language specialist visit various classrooms and schools, in much the same manner as a music or art teacher.

NATIVE SPEAKERS HELP TEACHERS

Requirements for certification are detailed in the Teacher's Certification Requirements, 1960-61, published by the Nevada State Department of Education. Special certificates are granted in a specific foreign language that enables teaching on the elementary level. Similar regulations exist in a number of other states.

V. THE STUDENT

It is now universally agreed that the optimum time for a child to learn one or several foreign languages is in early childhood. At this point, imitative and retentive processes are at their peak. Children learn foreign languages quickly and easily; indeed, in early childhood they are not even aware that they are "foreign".

The beginning of a regular elementary school foreign language program has been assigned, in most cases, to grade three. Kindergarten and first grade programs exist and are highly successful, but the majority, due to many reasons, favor grade three.

The "Philosophy of Foreign Language Education" stated previously, maintains that the public schools should offer ". . . to all students the opportunity to study foreign languages." All students should have the opportunity. Many, naturally, will not pursue it deeply, but each child should be given a chance to see how well adapted he is to this area. As yet, there are not instruments to effectively measure linguistic ability in small children and every child may have talent. Secondly, if the language learning occurs in natural, everyday, situations, an average child should encounter little difficulty with a second language, since he is learning by the same process as does the native child.

VI. THE PROGRAM

Complete articulation, from the beginning through the secondary school, is the foundation of a successful foreign language program as in any area of the curriculum. For this reason, teachers from all levels should be involved in the over-all planning of the undertaking.

Whenever a school cannot enter completely into a full ten-year program, including both elementary and secondary foreign languages, it should first aim at the establishment of a six-year secondary program beginning in grade seven. Schools wishing to enter gradually into an extended foreign language program should then proceed to inaugurate instruction downward from grade seven to the desired beginning position in grade three.

The ten-year program, beginning in grade three, has been outlined in the joint publication of the National Education Association and the Modern Language Association of America, Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student. With their kind permission it is reproduced here. For a complete description of the program, readers are referred to pages 42 to 51 of the book.

An elementary foreign language program must be envisioned as a part of the child's total education and, as such, an integral part of the school curriculum and the school routine. Scheduling should be definite and regular - the period should not be looked

THE TEN-YEAR FL PROGRAM

GRADE	CLASS TIME	AUDIO-LINGUAL EXPERIENCE	KNOWLEDGE OF STRUCTURE	READING EXPERIENCE	WRITING EXPERIENCE
3-4-5	5 15-Min. periods weekly	Dialogues for imitation and memorization			
6		Drills and exercises	Formal structure or pattern drills	First visual access to materials learned in grades 3-4-5	
7	3 full periods weekly	Narrative selections presented orally, some old materials, some new cultural materials Dialogues and drills continue Electro-mechanical aids to reinforce and evaluate		Emphasis on reading as a skill	Copying known material at home; dictation of prepared, assigned materials
8		Dialogues and drills on basic sentences	More emphasis on structure drills	Reading aloud in imitation of the teacher; introduction of new words in the foreign language Homework reading for comprehension without translation	
9	5 full periods weekly	Increased use of pictures, readings, recordings with varied voices	Teacher begins to label and summarize grammatical patterns after the drills are mastered	Glossaries in the foreign language	Students imitate native models and use simple paraphrase techniques Some written pattern drills
10		Radio programs and films Discussion of reading and culture	Structure drills continue	Foreign language dictionary Plays and stories	More written pattern drills Varied paraphrase techniques Directed compositions, résumés, etc.
11		Everything that concerns the class is a basis for conversation	Structural knowledge now complete; structural summaries	Nonfiction, including magazines and newspapers	Written summaries of oral discussions Area-study notebooks
12	3 or 5 full periods weekly	Literary discussions		Literary materials	Brief introduction to translation

upon as an "Activity Period" to be pre-empted for special programs, testing, or extra curricular activities.

The secondary Course of Study for Modern Foreign Languages, currently being written, is designed to be readily adaptable for the six-year program. Elementary schools with a K-8 or 1-8 organization who wish to begin a foreign language, but who are unable to enter the full ten-year program, should follow the outlines illustrated. Under the six-year program, the seventh and eighth grade students are expected to finish the equivalent of a full year of foreign language study in two years. This necessitates a rather large block of time per week, since the minimum permitted for foreign language in the secondary school is two hundred minutes per week.

Grade 7	Grade 8
Level I-A	Level I-B
100-125 minutes per week.	100-125 minutes per week.

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Introductory phase, Audio-Lingual	Level I-A	Level I-B
75-100 minutes per week.	90-100 minutes per week.	90-100 minutes per week.

At the completion of either of the programs shown, the student should be able to enter Level II in the ninth grade, permitting the completion of five levels of foreign language in a sustained six-year sequence. The total six-year program would thus include five levels of the language. The Course of Study for Modern Foreign Languages will be written in five levels to fit this program. A second foreign language could be undertaken by the student in Grade Ten.

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Level I-A	Level I-B	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V
100-125 minutes per week	100-125 minutes per week	200-275 minutes per week	200-275 minutes per week	200-275 minutes per week	120-275 minutes per week

The correlation and integration of other disciplines with foreign languages should not be overlooked. After the numbers are learned, one can do arithmetic in the second language - just as the colors can lead into an art lesson or pronunciation be taught by music. The social studies provide a wealth of teaching materials for the foreign language teacher. Most foreign language texts contain a large amount of geography, history, and cultural background, either contained in the foreign language reading selections or in English sections spaced throughout the book.

The problem of time in the school day can be alleviated to a great degree by careful planning. The person who uses lack of time as an argument against instituting an elementary school program has not thought deeply of the many areas that can be combined in the self-contained classroom. Certain California schools have been experimenting, with success, on the teaching of Spanish through biology. What other possibilities for integration exist is still open to the imagination of the teacher and administrator.

The most serious question raised in any program is "How much of the language skill has the student accomplished in the time allowed?" Upon the answer to this lies the starting point of the next level of lesson. This question is most critical when raised by the secondary school teacher, since he has a legitimate right to know where to place students who have progressed through a sequence of several years of elementary foreign language study.

To place these students in a beginning foreign language class nullifies the entire program and is unfair to the student. Yet the secondary school teacher should be able to rely on a former elementary school student who is placed with secondary school students who have had a year or more of foreign language study. The answer may lie in a track system since the secondary schools must continue to offer beginning foreign language classes.

VII. SYLLABI AND TEACHING MATERIALS

The actual content of foreign language instruction should be carefully planned before the program is started. Children in the early stages of language learning should learn meaningful utterances based on their enviornmental and social experiences. This is normally accomplished by means of situation dialogs and drills based upon them.

In writing or gathering materials for elementary school foreign languages, the following points should serve as criteria;

A. Instruction should follow the natural sequence of language learning: hearing, speaking, reading, writing.

B. Instruction should be planned to meet individual differences.

C. The vocabulary should be related to the immediate interests and experiences of the students.

D. Language learning should be from the whole to the part. Isolated words should not be taught, but rather meaningful sentences and expressions.

E. The child should enjoy learning a foreign language and provisions should be made to permit students to help plan classroom activities.

F. Children should be able to evaluate their growth in the foreign language.

G. One dialog or unit should lead progressively into the next.

Good teacher's guides are a necessity in teaching foreign languages at the elementary school level. They aid all teachers in their daily routine, as well as assuring continuity and articulation of the total program. The guide chosen, however, should not be so detailed as to restrict the imagination and ingenuity of the Teacher. It must be a "guide" but not a mold.

In general, teacher's syllabi should contain the following information.

1. A general philosophy of foreign language education.*
2. Objectives of foreign language study.*
3. Specific objectives of the elementary school program.
4. Instruction on classroom procedures.
5. Descriptions and lists of materials and equipment to be used, including audio-visual aids.
6. Instruction for use and integration of the materials and aids.
7. Specific objectives of each lesson unit.
8. Instructions for evaluation and sample test materials.
9. Glossaries of language terms, selected bibliographies, and lists of supplementary materials and aids.

Recently, more commercial publishing firms have entered the field, some of the works being produced in great detail. Although many of these are excellent, they should be carefully examined and evaluated before adoption by the local school. Criteria for this evaluation should be based on the seven points listed previously on writing or gathering material.

* *See* Philosophy and Statement of Objectives on page 3

VIII. SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

The foreign language in the elementary school program should be closely supervised by either a special system-wide supervisor or a local administrator. Close supervision and coordination is essential to insure the success of the program.

This means that a person, preferably one especially trained in foreign language education, should be in constant close contact with the teacher and the classroom situation. In instances of a single foreign language teacher in a school or district this is, of course, impossible. In this situation, however, there should be a specific administrator to whom the teacher is responsible. This administrator should maintain a real and constant interest in the program, including classroom visitations. In addition, consultative services and assistance is available from the State Department of Education.

The foreign language program should be evaluated, not only on a student achievement basis, but as a portion of the entire curriculum. The general philosophy and statement of objectives established should be reviewed and the program evaluated in terms of accomplishing these goals.

IX. REASONS FOR FAILURE OF FLES PROGRAMS

All too often, an elementary school foreign language program is discontinued after a year or more. In order to apprise schools contemplating the undertaking of an elementary school foreign language program of some dangers to watch, it is advantageous to examine the reasons given for failure. Often there are many causes, usually interdependent, but the three most commonly mentioned are:

1. Lack of a teacher.

2. Lack of facilities and finances.

3. Lack of time in the school day.

It would seem that lack of adequate advance planning and preparation would underlie these three reasons in many cases. The teacher shortage in the area of elementary school foreign language is acute and will probably remain so for the forseeable

future. It has been alleviated to a great extent in metropolitan areas by the use of a "floating" teacher or by television.

The second and third reasons listed are largely administrative and are, all too often, utilized by persons to discourage FLES programs where more valid reasons cannot be found. It is quite true that these reasons are often true, but school personnel should be warned against their use to rationalize personal beliefs and attitudes concerning foreign language instruction at the elementary school level.

X. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND TITLE III

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Public Law 864) provides funds on a matching basis for the purchase of teaching materials and equipment by local school districts in the area of modern foreign languages. These monies, provided under Title III of the Act, are administered by the State Department of Education to aid in the establishment of new or improved foreign language programs.

Elementary school foreign language materials and equipment projects are on an equal standing with those from secondary schools. Schools are allocated funds by need rather than by grade level. Schools entering programs are encouraged to apply to the State Department of Education for matching funds to purchase needed equipment and teaching materials. Approvable items are detailed in the Standard Lists of Equipment and Materials, Title III. (Revised edition, March 1, 1961) published by the Curriculum Division of the State Department of Education. Assistance and advice on applying for federal matching funds is available from the State Foreign Language Consultant.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The curriculum of the Nevada elementary school is detailed in the Nevada Elementary Course of Study - State Department of Education, 1959 - and subsequent revisions. Foreign languages are not included in the Course of Study, therefore, in order for a school district to inaugurate instruction, permission must be received from the State Board of Education through the State Department of Education.

Any school will be considered an elementary school that is so classified under current apportionment formulae. Until the adoption and publication of a Junior High School Course of Study and/or a Course of Study for Modern Foreign Languages, grades seven and eight in regularly organized junior high schools will also be considered as elementary grades.

The State Board of Education may grant permission to teach foreign languages in the elementary schools provided that:

1. A detailed plan of the proposed program is submitted, showing:

   a. That the program is planned on a permanent basis, with adequate facilities and financing.

   b. Teacher qualifications and background.

   c. The criteria, if any, for admittance of students to the program.

   d. Articulation of the elementary program with the secondary program to provide a complete, unbroken sequence of instruction in a modern foreign language.

   e. Schedule of classes.

   f. Provisions for adequate supervision of the program.

   g. A listing of texts, syllabi, guides, and materials to be used in instruction.

2. Class size must not exceed thirty-five students and instruction must be provided for a minimum of five twenty-minute, or three thirty-minute, periods per week for each class.

Permission to teach foreign languages in the elementary school is granted on an annual basis only. Schools must request permission by February 1 of the year preceding the school year for which the program is planned.

Permission for extension of a previously approved program is to be requested at the time that evaluations are submitted concerning the approved program.

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